

Science Communication as a Professional Obligation, Nanci Bompey, American Geophysical Union

Nanci Bompey, Assistant Director of the [American Geophysical Union](#) (AGU) Public Information Office, spoke about the multiple ways AGU works with scientists to help them to talk to journalists and communicate the impact of their work to the public and within their own communities.

AGU offers scientists “the fastest publication times in Earth and science space journals, allowing their research to be accessed, read, and cited sooner.” From these submissions, AGU is continually curating the most newsworthy articles to publish on its website and/or in one of their 22 peer-reviewed journals, e.g., Geophysical Research Letters, GeoSpace, and GeoHealth. The office sends out a weekly alert to journalists of stories they might be interested in pursuing.

Bompey offered her best practices for scientists seeking to establish their personal brands. She emphasized the importance of establishing a relationship with a journalist, telling them about their work over coffee or inviting them to an event. To gain press for an impending paper or publication, she tells scientists to make contact with a journalist as early as possible. Even better, a scientist can let a journalist know when their paper is submitted. Remaining in contact with a journalist up to deadline and through to publication is imperative.

The exposure offered by AGU is not exclusively for its members. Part of their mission is preparing scientists to talk to journalists and policy makers. As Bompey framed it, research and discovery mean a lot more when coming from a scientist in a policymaker’s district.

While AGU’s focus is on Earth and space science, the organization offers open-source tools, trainings, and materials for scientists of any field of study. AGU has an impressive library of free online resources for scientists and communications people to hone the craft of speaking to the media and the public. These include webinars, worksheets, a guide to working with the media, and “train the trainer” resources for communications professionals at labs and universities. AGU’s annual Fall Meeting also highlights press events and sessions for breaking big research news.

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